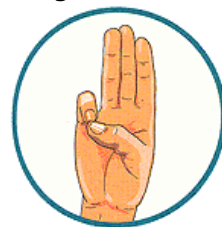

Suggestions for Leading Middle-School Aged Girl Scouts

Many scientists and engineers may not have experience interacting with this age group. While they may be accomplished teachers in a university setting, there are some key differences in how to successfully interact with middle-school aged children instead of adults or even high-school aged students. Additionally, there are specific points to consider when working with Girl Scouts.

1. Whenever possible, engage the students' participation. Ask them questions; involve them in demonstrations; etc. Make it an interactive experience.
2. Do NOT lecture. You will lose their interest almost immediately. If you feel that the material calls for a lecture, see the previous point, and make it as involved for them as possible. Find a reason to get them up every few minutes or so, even if it's just to pick up a piece of paper and sit down again. Even something as minor as this keeps them from zoning out.
3. Get them up and moving around whenever there's an opportunity. Even things as simple as having a volunteer up for a minute to demonstrate something, or walking up to the front of the room to retrieve a worksheet or image will keep them more involved and therefore more engaged.
4. Girl Scout culture has an established method of quieting a noisy room that can be used to your advantage. Raising the right hand over the head to signal for attention is known as the quiet sign. The key part of this is that when one holds their hand in the air in this manner, one is not allowed to speak. **THIS INCLUDES THE PRESENTER**, so do not hold your hand up and continue speaking. As each person in the room sees this, they too will hold their hand in the air, until the entire room has caught on. Once the entire room has gone silent and all hands are in the air, you may lower your hand and speak to the group. In some areas you may see the Girl Scout sign (3 fingers up) as pictured to the right, used in this manner instead of just a hand in the air.
5. Girl Scouts frequently come with parents who will attend such events with the girls. This can be very useful in maintaining order among the girls, and you should feel free to use these parents for that purpose. The downside of having ever present adults is that they can feel the need to jump in with answers if the girls are shy or uncertain and taking a while to come up with a response to a general question. You should gently discourage this, as this activity is designed for the girls' benefit



rather than their parents, and it may even be helpful to have alternate activities for them to be engaged in instead.

6. Girl Scouts frequently want to know what badge requirements they might be able to complete, so be aware that you may be asked related questions at the end of your presentation. You should certainly discourage any such questions at the beginning of the session or during. We will try in an upcoming revision to include some notes points in these activities where they might meet their requirements, but it will certainly not be an exhaustive list. However you choose to deal with this eventuality, you should at least be forewarned that it may take place.